

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 06448 01 OF 02 120941Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00
OMB-01 /083 W
-----056595 120945Z /15

R 091412Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8216
INFO VUFHRS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 3653
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 6448

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB TS
SUBJ: ACHOUR PRESS CONFERENCE PREPOTED IN SANITIZED VERSION;
MASMOUDI ANNOUNCES HIS EARLY RETURN TO TUNIS

REF: TUNIS 6399 AND TUNIS 6400

1. SUMMARY: ALL TUNIS PAPERS REPORTED ON HABIB ACHOUR'S
SEPTEMBER 6 PRESS CONFERENCE IN THEIR SEPTEMBER 9 EDITIONS.
VERSION IN PSD DAILY L'ACTION
LIMITED ITSELF TO REPORTING ACHOR'S STATEMENTS ON
CONDITIONS AND WAGES FOR TUNISIAN WORKERS IN LIBYA WHILE
SEMI-INDEPENDENT LE TEMPS ADDED BRIEF NOTE HINTING AT
ANTI-NOURIRA REMARKS PLUS A PICTURE OF ACHOUR MEETING
WITH COL. QADHAFI. TRADE UNION WEEKLY ECH-CHAAB
PUBLISHED ITS OWN VERSION GIVING FULLER ATTENTION TO
WORKING CONDITIONS AND WAGES BUT ADDING AS WELL ACHOUR
BTATEMENT THAT "MASMOUDI IS A CITIZEN" AND WANTS TO
RETURN SOON TO TUNISIA. MEANWHILE , MASMOUDI TOLD
AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE IN PARIS THAT HE WILL RETURN TO
TUNIS IN NEAR FUTURE TO WORK AT THE SIDE OF HIS "TRADE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TUNIS 06448 01 OF 02 120941Z

UNION BROTHERS." IF ACHOUR BACKED OFF FROM HIS
ANTI-NOUIRA POSITION DURING SEPTEMBER 7 POLITICAL
BUREAU MEETING, HE APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED NEVERTHELESS
TO KEEP UP PRESSURE IN COLLABORATION WITH MASMOUDI.
EDITORIAL IN L'ACTION OF SEPTEMBER 9 CONTINUED LINES
OF THOUGHT COVERED PREVIOUS DAY
EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY

SUPPORTING NATIONAL UNITY AND ABIDING BY THEIR
COMMITMENTS TO PARTY POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. GOT CONTROLLED RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS
BROADCASTS REPORTED EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 8 ON HABIB
ACHOUR'S SEPTEMBER 6 PRESS CONFERENCE NOTING ONLY
STATEMENTS CONCERNING CONDITIONS AND WAGES FOR TUNISIAN
WORKERS IN LIBYA. SEPTEMBER 9 PRESS CARRIED ACCOUNTS OF
PRESS CONFERENCE (WITHOUT ONLY ACHOUR'S STATEMENTS ON
WORKING CONDITIONS IN LIBYA AND HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH
LIBYA TRADE UNION LEADER AND WITH KHOULDI EL HAMIDI.
NO REFERENCE WAS MADE TO ACHOUR'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING
HIS MEETINGS WITH MASMOUDI AND COL. QADHAFI IN TRIPOLI
NOR TO ACHOUR'S HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS ABOUT
MASMOUDI.

3. SEMI-INDEPENDENT DAILY LE TEMPS REPEATED L'ACTION
VERSION (WHICH WAS GOVERNMENT PRESS AGENCY TAPS'S RELEASE)
WORD FOR WORD BUT ADDED SENTENCE AT END WHICH SAID,
"ACHOUR EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION IN VIEW OF FACT THAT
THE EFFORTS CARRIED OUT BY THE UGTT TOWARDS STRENGTHENING
THE FRATERNAL TIES BETWEEN TUNISIAN AND LIBYA ARE NOW
UPHELD EVEN BY THOSE WHO, AT THE BEGINNING, DEMONSTRATED
SOME RESERVE." LE TEMPS JUXTAPOSED TO ARTICLE A
PICTURE OF ACHOUR WITH QADHAFI ALTHOUGH TEXT CONTAINED
NO REFERENCE TO THEIR MEETING.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TUNIS 06448 01 OF 02 120941Z

4. UGTT WEEKLY ECH-CHAAB IN ITS REGULAR SEPTEMBER 9
EDITION ALSO REPORTED ON ACHOUR'S SEPTEMBER 6 PRESS
CONFERENCE, GIVING CONSIDERABLY MORE DETAIL ABOUT
ACHIEVEMENTS OBTAINED IN HIS RECENT TRIP TO LIBYA.
ACHOUR IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID HE HAD REACHED AGREEMENT
ON MINIMUM WAGE LEVELS FOR TUNISIAN AGRICULTURAL
WORKERS IN LIBYA, WHEREBY THEY WILL RECEIVE LIBYAN
MINIMUM WAGE OF 60 LIBYAN DINARS (90 TUNISIAN DINARS)
RATHER THAN TUNISIAN MINIMUM WAGE OF 25 DINARS, AS
STIPULATED IN AGRICULTURAL ACCORDS
SIGNED IN TRIPOLI LAST MONTH BY AGRICULTURAL MINISTER
BELKHODJA. ACHOUR ALSO IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID
ALTHOUGH THE LIBYAN BROTHERS WERE PUSHING FOR IMMEDIATE
UNITY HE EXPLAINED THAT WHILE TUNISIAN BROTHERS
ARE ATTACHED TO PRINCIPLE OF UNITY, CHANCES
OF SUCCESS WILL BE BETTER IF SLOWER BUT MORE SURE PROCESS OF
COOPERATION AND RAPPROCHEMENT IS FOLLOWED. ARTICLE NOTES
ACHOUR AS SAYING HE ALSO DISCUSSED VARIOUS POSSIBLE
JOINT VENTURES (BETWEEN LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN LABOR
ORGANIZATIONS) IN FISHING AND CON-
STRUCTION INDUSTRIES, AND THAT LIBYAN DELEGATION OF

EXPERTS WOULD SOON COME TO TUNISIA TO EVALUATE PROPOSALS.
IN ADDITION ACHOUR REPORTED HE DISCUSSED WAYS TO FACILITATE
WORKER MOVEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.

5. ECH-CHAAB ARTICLE PROVIDED ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION WHICH WAS NOT REPORTED IN DAILY PRESS
HOWEVER. ACHOUR WAS QUOTED AS STATING HE HAD MET WITH
QADHAFI AT LENGTH, BUT NO DETAILS WERE GIVEN OF
CIRCUMSTANCES OF MEETING OR TOPICS DISCUSSED.
ARTICLE ALSO NOTED WITHOUT
FURTHER DETAILS THAT ACHOUR HAD MET WITH MOHAMED
MASMOUDI, FORMER TUNISIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.
ACHOUR WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION,
THAT MASMOUDI IS A TUNISIAN CITIZEN, THAT NO VERDICT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TUNIS 06448 01 OF 02 120941Z

HAS BEEN ISSUED AGAINST HIM, AND THAT HE HAD BEEN MERELY
EXCLUDED FROM THE PARTY. ACHOUR ADDED THAT
MASMOUDI NOW WISHES TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY. RELATED
EDITORIAL IN ECH-CHAAB HAILED QADHAFI'S SPEECH ON SEPT 1,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 06448 02 OF 02 120938Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00
OMB-01 /083 W

-----056585 120945Z /13

R 091412Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8217
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TUNIS 6448

AND SPOKE HIGHLY OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF LIBYAN REVOLUTION.
ECH-CHAAB DID NOT PUBLISH ANY STRONGER WORDS OF PRAISE

FOR MASMOUDI, NOR MAKE ANY REFERENCE TO WHAT WE UNDERSTAND WERE STRONGLY CRITICAL REMARKS ABOUT NOUIRA AND DIRECT REFERENCES TO MASMOUDI BEING THE "ONLY MAN" CAPABLE OF RESOLVING TUNISIAN'S PROBLEMS. ACHOUR WAS QUOTED AS HAVING DEFENDED UGTT ACTIONS IN RECENT INCIDENTS IN SFAX (SEE TUNIS 6400). ECH-CHAAB ALSO QUOTED ANOTHER UGTT OFFICIAL WHO CONFIRMED PUBLICLY THAT PROTEST TELEGRAMS HAD BEEN SENT TO PRIME MINISTER AND INFORMATION MINISTER OVER NEWS BLACKOUT OF ACHOUR PRESS CONFERENCE.

6. MEANWHILE, AGENCE FRANCE PRESS BUREAU IN TUNIS ADVISED US THAT MASMOUDI MADE DECLARATION IN PARIS THAT HE WOULD RETURN SOON TO TUNISIA. MASMOUDI DECLARED THAT HE WOULD "NOT ASSUME A GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION EXCEPT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A CONFEDERATION OR REGIONAL EXPERIENCE IN A MAGHREBIAN CONTEXT OR WITH ONE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES BORDERING TUNISIA." HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED AT THE "HOPEFULLY IRREVERSIBLE" CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TUNIS 06448 02 OF 02 120938Z

RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN TUNISIA AND LIBYA, TO WHICH HE HAD "MODESTLY CONTRIBUTED." MASMOUDI ADDED THAT TUNISIANS AND LIBYANS HAD ASKED HIM TO RETURN AND TO CONTINUE WORKING IN FAVOR OF RAPPROCHEMENT AT THE SIDE OF HIS "TRADE UNION BROTHERS" IN THE UGTT.

7. COMMENT: THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN TUNIS APPEARS TO REMAIN FLUID. IF HABIB ACHOUR BACKED OFF FROM HIS STRONG ANTI-NOUIRA POSITION DURING THE SEPTEMBER 7 POLITICAL BUREAU MEETING, THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A TACTICAL MOVE. HIS VERSION OF THE SEPTEMBER 6 PRESS CONFERENCE AS PUBLISHED IN ECH-CHAAAB DID NOT CONTAIN ANY OF HIS MOST EGREGIOUS ANTI-NOQUIYA REMARKS BUT CONTAINED, NONETHELESS, SOME KIND WORDS FOR MASMOUDI PLUS A SPIRITED DEFENSE OF THE UGTT ROLE IN THE SFAX INCIDENTS. MASMOUDI'S STATEMENT IN PARIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN COORDINATED WITH ACHOUR'S ANTI-NOUIRA BLAST IN TUNIS, WITH THE TWO OF THEM UNDOUBTEDLY THINKING THAT THE MOMENT WAS OPPORTUNE TO STRIKE AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER.

8. THE GOVERNMENT GIVES EVERY INDICATION OF STANDING FAST AGAINST THE ACHOU-MASMOUDI ONSLAUGHT. L'ACTION'S SEPTEMBER 9 EDITORIAL CONTINUES LINES OF THOUGHT EXPRESSED IN SEPTEMBER 8 EDITORIAL (SEE TUNIS 6399, PARA 11). L'ACTION MAKES STRONG DEFENSE OF NATIONAL UNITY AND ATTACKS THOSE WHO SEEK TO BETRAY POLICIES AGREED ON BY ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY. L'ACTION CALLED FOR DISCIPLINE AND LOYALTY.

9. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, WHOSE POLITICAL POSITION LOOKED
WEAK AT THE FIRST OF THIS WEEK, WILL HAVE HIS SAY
TONIGHT. HE IS NOT GIVEN TO DRAMATIC OR BLUNT PUBLIC
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TUNIS 06448 02 OF 02 120938Z

STATEMENTS OF POLITICAL REALITIES BUT THE SITUATION
APPEARS TO CALL FOR A FAIRLY GLOBAL STATEMENT OF HIS
POLICY AND WHAT HE EXPECTS IN TERMS OF SUPPORT FROM
ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY.
MULCAHY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TUNIS06448
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770329-0715
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770978/aaaacohw.tel
Line Count: 239
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f7fa0d49-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TUNIS 6399, 77 TUNIS 6400
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1321716
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACHOUR PRESS CONFERENCE PREPOTED IN SANITIZED VERSION; MASMOUDI ANNOUNCES HIS EARLY RETURN TO TUNIS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, TS, (ACHOUR, HABIB)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f7fa0d49-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009